

Message Text

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ORIGIN SS-15

INFO OCT-01 ONY-00 ISO-00 SSO-00 CCO-00 /016 R

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DRAFTED BY: E:RASORENSEN:NAF

APPROVED BY:E:RASORENSEN

S/S-O:SESTEINER

DESIRED DISTR E ONLY

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O 202257Z SEP 76 ZFF4

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO USDEL SECRETARY IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 233157 TOSEC 270419

FOR UNDER SECRETARY ROGERS

FOLLOWING REPEAT OECD PARIS 27353 ACTION SECSTATE INFO BOGOTA 18
SEP 76.

QUOTE: C O N F I D E N T I A L OECD PARIS 27353

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: AORG, OECD

SUBJECT: COLOMBIAN APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP IN OECD

REF: (A) OECD 26924 (B) STATE 231184

1. REFTEL (B) WAS RECEIVED SEPTEMBER 18 AFTER HEADS OF
DEL MEETING.

2. OECD SECGEN VAN LENNEP INTRODUCED THIS SUBJECT TO
OECD HEADS OF DELEGATION MEETING SEPTEMBER 17 BY REPORTING
JULY DEMARCHE BY COLOMBIAN AMBASSADOR, WHO INQUIRED
ON INSTRUCTIONS AS TO CONDITIONS AND POSSIBILITIES FOR
ACCESSION TO OECD. VAN LENNEP REPORTED THAT DURING THAT
VISIT HE EXPLAINED THE SPECIAL NATURE AND IDENTITY OF
THE ORGANIZATION AND THE FACT THAT ITS USEFULNESS TO A
LARGE MEASURE DEPENDED ON THE RESTRICTED NATURE OF ITS
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MEMBERSHIP. HE INDICATED THAT HE EXPLAINED TO THE

COLOMBIAN AMBASSADOR THAT UNLIKE UN AND OTHER ORGANIZATIONS WHICH HAVE PROVISIONS FOR "APPLICATIONS" FOR MEMBERSHIP, OECD IS CLOSED EXCEPT WHEN (UNDER ARTICLE 16 OF THE CONVENTION) THE EXISTING MEMBERSHIP, ACTING UNANIMOUSLY INVITED (UNDERLINE) A COUNTRY TO JOIN. VAN LENNEP CONTINUED THAT THE GENERAL POLICY OF OECD HAS BEEN THAT EXISTING MEMBERSHIP MUST BE CONVINCED UNANIMOUSLY THAT PROSPECTIVE MEMBER WOULD CONTRIBUTE TO THE EFFECTIVENESS OF ECONOMIC COOPERATION WITHIN THE ORGANIZATION.

3. VAN LENNEP SAID THAT HE TOLD COLOMBIAN AMBASSADOR ABOUT OECD DISCUSSION IN 1971 ON VARIOUS FORMS OF RELATIONSHIPS WITH NON-MEMBER COUNTRIES BASED ON DOCUMENT CES(71) 101 15 NOVEMBER, 1971. THAT DISCUSSION COVERED RANGE OF POSSIBILITIES, INCLUDING ACCESSION OF NEW MEMBERS, PARTICIPATION, OBSERVER STATUS IN MEETINGS, AND TECHNICAL CONTACTS WITH NON-MEMBERS. VAN LENNEP CONCLUDED REPORT OF DISCUSSION WITH COLOMBIAN AMBASSADOR BY SAYING THAT HE FELT AT THE END OF THAT VISIT THAT COLOMBIAN AMBASSADOR HAD AGREED THAT IT WOULD BE UNFORTUNATE IF COLOMBIA WERE TO POSE OFFICIALLY THE QUESTION OF MEMBERSHIP WHICH WOULD ELICIT A NEGATIVE RESPONSE. HE THEREFORE WAS SURPRISED BY CABLE FROM FINANCE MINISTER WHICH IN FACT DOES OFFICIALLY POSE QUESTION OF MEMBERSHIP. IN VIEW OF A REFERENCE TO BOTERO'S MESSAGE THAT COLOMBIA WOULD BE APPROACHING MEMBER GOVERNMENTS IN CAPITALS, HE HAD CALLED HEADS OF DELEGATION TOGETHER URGENTLY TO ESTABLISH A COMMON LINE WITH RESPECT TO COLOMBIAN APPROACHES. BEYOND QUESTION OF COLOMBIAN APPROACH, VAN LENNEP SAID HE HAS FELT FOR SOME TIME THAT IT WAS UNFORTUNATE THE ORGANIZATION HAD NOT DEVELOPED THE POSSIBILITY FOR OFFICIAL RELATIONS WITH NON-MEMBER COUNTRIES AS FORESEEN IN ARTICLE 12B OF THE CONVENTION AND AS DISCUSSED INCONCLUSIVELY IN 1971. AT THE PRESENT TIME, HE SAID, ORGANIZATION IN EFFECT OFFERS ONLY BLACK OR WHITE RESPONSE TO INQUIRIES FROM NON-MEMBERS AND HAS NOT DEVELOPED A PATTERN OF POSSIBLE RELATIONSHIPS IN SELECTED CASES. HE POINTED OUT THAT IN CONFIDENTIAL

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RECENT YEARS OECD HAS BEEN ATTRACTING INCREASING INTEREST FROM NON-MEMBER COUNTRIES, CITING THE ARGENTINE OFFICIAL REQUEST TO ATTEND THE MINISTERS OF AGRICULTURE MEETING AND THE SOMEWHAT LESS OFFICIAL SOUNDINGS BY ISRAEL TO PARTICIPATE IN SOME ENERGY ACTIVITIES. HITHERTO, ORGANIZATION HAS FLATLY REFUSED MOST OF THESE APPROACHES. IN THE LONGER RUN, SUCH REFUSALS MAY NOT PROVE SATISFACTORY IN THE LIGHT OF THE NEW IMPORTANCE OF THE

ORGANIZATION. VAN LENNEP CONCLUDED BY REFERRING BACK TO THE PRESENT COLOMBIAN APPROACH, POINTING OUT THAT THE REQUEST WAS SIGNED BY THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (AND NOT BY MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS), WHO INDICATED HIS READINESS TO STATE HIS CASE TO THE OECD COUNCIL. CITING SOME FIGURES, HE ALSO POINTED OUT THAT THE COLOMBIAN ECONOMY IS SOMEWHERE AMONG THE MEDIUM IN TERMS OF WEALTH IN LATIN AMERICA, UNLIKE, SAY, THAT OF BRAZIL.

4. SUBSEQUENT STATEMENTS BY HEADS OF DEL PRESENT CAN BE SUMMARIZED AS FOLLOWS:

(A) COLOMBIANS HAD NOT YET MADE ANY APPROACHES TO MEMBER GOVERNMENTS.

(B) THERE WAS UNANIMOUS VIEW THAT COLOMBIAN MEMBERSHIP WOULD NOT BE APPROPRIATE. THOSE PERMREPS WHO HAD RECEIVED DEFINITE INSTRUCTIONS FROM THEIR GOVERNMENTS (E.G. JAPAN, SWITZERLAND, IRELAND, NEW ZEALAND) WERE MOST CATEGORIC ON THE SUBJECT. THOSE WHO HAD NOT YET RECEIVED INSTRUCTIONS GENERALLY EXPRESSED THEMSELVES AS CONFIDENT THAT THEIR AUTHORITIES AGREED WITH THIS CONCLUSION. THE VIEW WAS REPEATEDLY EXPRESSED THAT THE CONTINUED USEFULNESS OF THE ORGANIZATION DEPENDED ON ITS RELATIVE HOMOGENEITY AND COHERENT CHARACTER AS AN ORGANIZATION OF DEVELOPED, INDUSTRIALIZED COUNTRIES. SOME SPEAKERS SPECIFICALLY STATED THAT THEY DID NOT RULE OUT FURTHER ACCESSION TO MEMBERSHIP BY CERTAIN COUNTRIES WHICH AS A RESULT OF THEIR DEVELOPMENT, OR CHANGING CIRCUMSTANCES, MIGHT USEFULLY BE INVITED TO JOIN. HOWEVER, A NUMBER OF SPEAKERS POINTED OUT SPECIFICALLY THAT COLOMBIA WAS NOT A LIKELY NEAR-TERM CANDIDATE AND THAT IF COLOMBIA WERE TO JOIN THERE WOULD BE NO WAY OF PREVENTING

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NUMEROUS LDC'S FROM JOINING, THUS COMPLETELY CHANGING THE CHARACTER OF THE INSTITUTION.

(C) SOME PUZZLEMENT WAS EXPRESSED AS TO COLOMBIA'S MOTIVATION IN MAKING THIS APPROACH AND OVER THE CURIOUS CIRCUMSTANCES, E.G., ROLE OF FINANCE MINISTER, FACT OF NO ADVANCE INFORMAL SOUNDINGS IN CAPITALS.

(D) SEVERAL DELEGATIONS SPECIFICALLY STATED, AND GROUP AS A WHOLE AGREED, THAT IT WOULD BE INAPPROPRIATE TO MAKE ANY RESPONSE TO COLOMBIA UNTIL LETTER REFERRED TO IN BOTERO'S CABLE IS ACTUALLY RECEIVED.

(E) ON THE BASIS OF NUMBER OF STATEMENTS, A CONSENSUS APPEARED TO EMERGE THAT THERE WAS A NEED FOR FUR-

THEIR CONSIDERATION OF THE WHOLE ISSUE OF RELATIONSHIPS WITH NON-MEMBER COUNTRIES. BRITISH AMBASSADOR SUGGESTED INFORMALLY THAT COUNCIL WORKING PARTY ON EXTERNAL RELATIONS (WHICH HAS BEEN RELATIVELY DORMANT) SHOULD RE-CONVENE FOLLOWING DISPOSAL OF COLOMBIAN MATTER TO CONSIDER THE WHOLE RANGE OF POSSIBILITIES FOR CONTACTS WITH NON-MEMBER COUNTRIES. ITALIAN REP SPOKE OF NEED FOR DEVELOPING CRITERIA FOR EACH CATEGORY. HOWEVER, WEIGHT OF OPINION WAS OPPOSED TO DEVELOPMENT OF HARD DOCTRINE AND IN FAVOR OF MAINTAINING PRAGMATIC APPROACH TO INDIVIDUAL CASES WHICH PRESERVED MAXIMUM POLITICAL FREEDOM OF ACTION FOR MEMBERSHIP. EC REP CITED POSSIBLE PRECEDENT VALUE OF COMMISSION MEETINGS WITH GROUP OF LATIN AMERICAN AMBASSADORS IN BRUSSELS. SOME INTEREST WAS EVINCED IN POSSIBLY LOOKING AT THIS PRECEDENT.

5. U.S. REPRESENTATIVE STATED THAT WHILE WE HAD NOT RECEIVED DEFINITIVE INSTRUCTIONS FROM WASHINGTON, BASED ON PREVIOUS INSTRUCTIONS IN SIMILAR CASES, THERE WAS NO REASON TO BELIEVE THAT WASHINGTON WOULD DISAGREE WITH THE CONSENSUS EXPRESSED THAT COLOMBIAN MEMBERSHIP IN OECD WOULD BE INAPPROPRIATE. WASHINGTON, HE SAID, HOLDS THE VIEW THAT OECD SHOULD BE MAINTAINED AS A RESTRICTED FORUM IN WHICH THE INDUSTRIALIZED DEMOCRACIES

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WOULD CONSIDER ECONOMIC ISSUES OF INTEREST TO THEM, AND POSSIBLE APPROACHES TO THESE ISSUES. WARMLY SUPPORTING THE SECGEN'S REMARKS ON NEED TO CONSIDER RELATIONSHIPS WITH SELECTED NON-MEMBER COUNTRIES, HE SAID THAT, BEFORE TURNING DOWN COLOMBIA'S APPLICATION, WE SHOULD CAREFULLY CONSIDER WHAT STEPS MIGHT BE TAKEN TO KEEP COLOMBIAN GOVERNMENT AND PERHAPS OTHER INTERESTED GOVERNMENTS APPROPRIATELY INFORMED OF OECD ACTIVITIES. HE RESERVED THE RIGHT TO RETURN TO THIS POINT ON A LATER OCCASION.

6. VAN LENNEP CONCLUDED MEETING BY SAYING THAT HEADS OF DEL SHOULD BE CONVENED ON THIS SUBJECT UPON RECEIPT OF THE COLOMBIAN GOVERNMENT'S LETTER. (IN ANY EVENT HEADS OF DEL TENTATIVELY WILL MEET SEPTEMBER 25.) HE REMINDED HEADS OF DEL OF LEGAL SITUATION REGARDING MEMBERSHIP IN OECD AND URGED THEM TO RECOMMEND TO THEIR CAPITALS THAT IN REPLYING TO POSSIBLE COLOMBIAN DEMARCHES STRESS SHOULD BE PLACED ON GENERAL POLICY RE NEW MEMBERS WHICH HAS GUIDED ORGANIZATION THUS FAR, NAMELY CRITERION OF CONTRIBUTION TO EFFECTIVENESS OF ORGANIZATION.

7. SPANISH AMBASSADOR PLEADED FOR EARLY DEFINITIVE DISPOSITION OF THIS MATTER BEFORE KING'S VISIT TO COLOMBIA SCHEDULED FOR OCTOBER 12. VAN LENNEP SAID HE TOO WOULD LIKE TO SEE MATTER CLEARLY DISPOSED OF BEFORE HE MEETS COLOMBIAN FINANCE MINISTER AT MANILA. TURNER UNQUOTE ROBINSON

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: MEMBERSHIP APPLICATIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 20 SEP 1976
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: ElyME
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976STATE233157
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: E:RASORENSEN:NAF
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760355-0584
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760940/aaaabiae.tel
Line Count: 230
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ORIGIN SS
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: ONLY
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 5
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: ONLY
Reference: 76 OECD PARIS 26924, 76 STATE 231184
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: ElyME
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 05 APR 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <05 APR 2004 by BoyleJA>; APPROVED <11 AUG 2004 by ElyME>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: COLOMBIAN APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP IN OECD
TAGS: AORG, EFIN, OECD
To: SECRETARY
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006